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ABSTRACT

THE FOLLOWING IS THE FULL TEXT OF THIS DOCUMENT: Today there are over 900 on-line data banks available for public access. Most microcomputers can use them through the aid of a modem and communication program. Major public information utilities that offer access to these on-line data bases are growing and expanding. The Source, a data base utility owned by Reader's Digest, claims to add 2000 new subscribers a month. Some of the services found on these utilities are: data bases on medicine, education, social science, energy issues, economic forecasts, parenting, business, and financial information. UPI's news wire service, as well as hundreds of newsletters and journals such as the NEW YORK TIMES and WALL STREET JOURNAL, can be utilized. Reference works such as ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA are also offered by some utilities. Other services utilities now offer are electronic mail and bulletin boards. Because of all these services, almost any library can find some way to make use of them. The big obstacle now is cost. Utilities usually have a one time initiation fee plus an hourly rate that may vary according to the time of day or to what service you are utilizing. Depending on your library's location, you may also have a long distance telephone charge added on. Improved technology and competition brought the computer in reach of small libraries and should do the same for on-line data bases. It will be to our benefit then to find out as much as we can about data bases and be ready to take advantage of them when we can justify the expense. The following is a list of some of the more well known public information utilities offering access to data bases. Write to them to find out more about what services they offer and the costs involved. BRS AFTER DARK, 1200 Route 7, Latham, NY 12110, 800-833-4707. COMPUSERVE, INC., 5000 Arlington C. Blvd., P.O. Box 20212, Columbus, OH 43220, 614-457-8650. DATA RESOURCES, INC., Visi Corp., 2895 Zanker Road, San Jose, CA 95134, 408-946-9000. DELPHI, 3 Blackstone Street, Cambridge, MA 02139, 800-544-4005. DOW JONES, News/Retrieval, P.O. Box 300, Princeton, NJ 08540, 800-222-0081. KNOWLEDGE INDEX, Dialog Infor. Services, Inc., 3460 Hillview Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94304, 800-528-6050 ext. 415. NEWSNET, 945 Haverford Road, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010, 800-345-1301. ORBIT, SDC Infor. Services, 2500 Colorado Avenue, Santa Monica, CA 90406, 800-421-7229. SOURCE TELECOMPUTING, 1616 Anderson Road, McLean, VA 22102, 800-336-3330. SPIN, Scott, Foresman & Co., Electronic Pub. Div., 1900 East Lake Ave., Chicago, IL 60025. (Author)

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Are On-Line Data Bases in Your Library's Future?

by Jim Deacon

Today there are over 900 on-line data banks available for public access. Most microcomputers can use them through the aid of a modem and communication program. Major public information utilities that offer access to these on-line data bases are growing and expanding. The Source, a data base utility owned by Reader's Digest, claims to add 2000 new subscribers a month.

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Because of all these services, almost any library can find some way to make use of them. The big obstacle now is cost. Utilities usually have a one time initiation fee plus an hourly rate that may vary according to the time of day or to what service you are utilizing. Depending on your library's location, you may also have a long distance telephone charge added on.

Improved technology and competition brought the computer in reach of small libraries and should do the same for on-line data bases. It will be to our benefit then to find out as much as we can about data bases and be ready to take advantage of them when we can justify the expense.

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